

Democratic Parents from the Point of View of Pupils

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Abstract: During the primary school period pupils acquire a great deal of skill , knowledge and attitude about life. The skill , knowledge and attitude pupils acquire during this period affects their lifelong behaviors. For individuals the most important institution where attitude and behaviors are established is family. Family affects all development processes of prime importance for a child. It is expected that knowledge and skills given to a child by means of education is to be consolidated in the family. Parents who set a good example for their children through their behaviors, at the same time help their children acquire a great deal of attitude and skills.

Key Words : Primary School , Democracy , Behaviors of Democratic Parents

Through this research , from the point of view of pupils what the democratic parental behaviors are have been studied. Three different primary schools, in total 120 pupils , have participated in this research in Erzurum. In this research descriptive method is preferred. In order to gather data, by researchers the data gathering form is used. The accumulated data has been analyzed through the content analysis technique.

Introduction :

The importance of the primary school period is huge to lay the foundations of democratic attitude and skills. During this period children are confronted with the concept of democracy for the first time. Unlike their families and circles of friends in primary schools children encounter various rules and they develop a lot of skills and behaviors by joining intensive interaction in school environment. In primary school we not only make pupils acquire knowledge but also help them to gain behaviors to adapt to life conditions.

One of the most important goals of the Turkish Education system is to enable pupils to use their rights according to democratic principles and to help them to acquire consciousness to carry out their responsibilities.

To constitute a democratic community depends on creating a democratic education system. Research (Evans & Rose, 2006; Harber & Serf, 2006; Mc Cowan, 2006; Neuberger, 2007) has shown that there is a close relationship between education and placing democracy in community consciousness. Democracy , which is defined as a way of life by educators (Başar, 2003; Büyükkaragöz, 1989; Gözütok, 1995; Gülmez, 1994; Kepenekçi, 2003; Tezcan, 1994) , at home by parents , at school by educators , in environment by all community members cannot be turned into a way of life without internalization. In order for democracy to be turned into a way of life , in the first place it must be accepted in the family and must be seen in the attitude and behaviors of family members. Because children face community life at first in family. For children social life commences with family and carries on in a school and friendships. A child who grows up in a democratic family environment and receives democratic education is liable to be a democratic member of a community. In the family, attitude and behaviors of parents affect children's opinions and belief in democracy.

Aim

The aim of this study is to establish what the democratic parental behaviors are from pupils' point of view.

Method

In the study descriptive method is preferred. So as to gather data by researchers data gathering form is used. The gathered data has been analyzed through the content analysis technique used in qualitative research data analysis. From three different primary schools in Erzurum 64 female and 56 male fourth and fifth graders , totaling 120 pupils participated in the research.

Findings

When answers of the pupils in the data gathering form are analyzed , democratic parental behaviors from pupils' point of view are grouped in three main themes : personal liberty , life at school , communication in family.

1. Personal Liberty

When answers of the pupils who have participated in the research are analyzed, the pupils have defined democratic parental behaviors from their personal liberty point of view. The pupils pertaining to improving the personal liberty area in their families expressed the following parental behaviors as democratic behaviors. These behaviors are shown in chart 1 in percentage and frequency terms.

According to Pupils Democratic Parental Behaviors Theme: Personal Liberty	f	%
To permit children to make their own decisions	33	28
To permit children to play games	28	24
To permit children to watch TV and play computer games	21	18
To permit children to choose their friends	20	17
To permit children to express their ideas	14	12
Total	116	100

Chart 1. From point of view of pupils democratic parental behaviors

When Chart 1 is examined in terms of having personal liberty in their families it is viewed that pupils have emulated behaviors of their parents. One of the most indispensable elements of democratic life is freedom provided for members of the community. Naturally pupils in primary schools according to their social life in terms of augmenting their personal liberty have assessed behaviors of their parents in view of democracy.

Democracy is individuals making their own decisions in relation to feelings , opinions and skills. Pupils regarded these parental behaviors which permit them freedom as democratic behaviors. Again in the lives of pupils games and making friends take an important place. In the research according to data gathered pupils have viewed the parents who have permitted them to play games and make their own friends as democratic parents. Another priority for pupils in terms of personal liberty is to take advantage of technological tools at home. According to pupils parents who let them watch TV and play computer games are democratic parents.

2. Communication in Family

Another theme comes into prominence as a result of qualitative analysis of the answers pupils have given related to democratic parental behaviors, is communication in family. The percentage and frequency distribution of democratic parental behaviors under the theme of communication in family is shown in Chart 2.

According to Pupils Democratic Parental Behaviors Theme: Communication in family	f	%
Equal treatment by parents to the siblings	36	31
Parents valuing the ideas of children	28	24
Not only is the father but also everyone in the family is influential	26	22
Respecting to each other in the family	15	13
Paying attention to the opinions of children	12	10
Total	117	100

Chart 2. Democratic parental behaviors according to pupils

When Chart 2 is examined pupils have emulated a part of democratic parental behaviors in terms of communication in family. In this theme pupils have considered parental behaviors relating both directly to themselves and to other members of the family as democratic. The concepts of equality and justice, the indispensable elements of democratic life are seen as the equal treatment of parents to siblings from pupils' point of view.

It is widely known by everybody that democracy doesn't depend on absolute authority. Pupils expressed this situation as the father is not the only authority in the family whereas all members in the family must be influential. Moreover from the point of view of pupils respecting to each other in the family and taking opinions of children into consideration is also perceived as democratic behaviors.

3. Life at School

When answers of the pupils relating to democratic parental behaviors are examined it has been viewed that pupils centered on parental behaviors relating to their life at school. For this reason democratic parental behaviors expressed by pupils are collected under the theme of life at school. Parental behaviors pertaining to life at school are shown in Chart 3.

According to Pupils Democratic Parental Behaviors		
Theme: Life at School	f	%
Rewarding accomplishments of pupils	29	26
Being understanding about exam results of pupils	26	23
Not compelling pupils to study	23	21
Not comparing achievements of pupils	19	17
Not interfering with friends of pupils	14	13
Total	111	100

Chart 3. Democratic parental behaviors according to pupils

As seen in Chart 3 parental behaviors which are viewed as democratic are closely connected with school life of pupils. Many parents evaluate their children according to school success. One of the areas where most conflicts between parents and children arise, is in a child's life at school. As seen in the chart pupils perceive positive parental behaviors pertaining to school success, exam results, studying, comparing them with other pupils and not interfering with school friendship as democratic behaviors.

Result and Discussion

As a result of qualitative analysis of research data, in terms of parental behaviors pupils have centered on three main themes: personal liberty, communication in family and life at school. This situation exhibits that pupils approach the concept of democracy in terms of their lives and liberty.

Under the theme of personal liberty, parental behaviors accepted as democratic by pupils are mainly about widening the areas of liberty. Playing games and freedom of using computers at home expressed under this theme highly reflect the point of view of pupils.

Through the communication in family theme, children have emphasized the importance of social life. In this theme, by emphasizing the concepts of justice and equality, which must exist in social life, children have viewed behaviors of their parents relating to this area as democratic behaviors. Furthermore pupils, by expressing that not only the father but also all members in the family must be influential, have pointed out that democratic life is to start primarily in the family.

Primary school is one of the most important elements that affect the lives of the pupils. School life at this age for pupils is sometimes a source of bliss and success, sometimes a source of fear and failure. School life becomes the most prevailing current issue and interactive area between pupils and parents. In this research pupils associated democratic parental behaviors with school life. Pupils see parents who reward their achievements, are understanding about exam results, don't compare them with others as democratic parents.

Pupils in their own opinions have described democratic parental behaviors by centering on their own lives and their relations with their families. In order for democracy to turn into a way of life in social life at first we have

to know the opinions of pupils and by concentrating on them both in family and at school we have to give importance to democratic education.

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